



Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
43301 Division Street, Suite 206
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 723-8070a

MEDIA RELEASE

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For further information contact:

Bret Banks, Operations Manager (661) 723-8070

Violette Roberts, Community Relations & Education Manager
(760) 245-1661, ext. 6104

STATE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICERS RELEASE NEW REPORT Antelope Valley's Air Quality Improves Significantly Over Past 12 Years

The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association has released its annual air quality report *California's Progress Toward Clean Air* for all 35 local air districts in the state documenting dramatic reductions in unhealthy levels of fine particulate pollution in every county reporting air quality data.

Fine particulate pollution, also known as PM_{2.5}, is associated with a wide range of health effects from increased hospitalizations to premature deaths. The report also shows a general trend of improving air quality for ground-level ozone, although some counties and their air district face unique challenges in reducing levels of that pollutant.

The report contains statistical information on ozone and PM_{2.5} air quality for 2000 and 2012 for each county; statewide air quality trends and detailed descriptions of air pollution control programs at each air quality district.

The Antelope Valley portion of Los Angeles County - which is under the regulatory authority of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District - was one of only eleven county regions in the state where no exceedances of the federal 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard (35 micrograms/cubic meter) occurred in either 2000 or 2012. PM_{2.5} is primarily formed in the atmosphere from gases such as sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, and is also directly emitted into the air from fuel combustion, and as fugitive dust.

The report also highlights a 22% decline in exceedances of the federal 0.075 part per million ozone standard which occurred throughout the AVAQMD's 1,300 square mile jurisdiction over the last twelve years. In 2000, 58 exceedance days were recorded district wide, while in 2012, only 45 days occurred. Meanwhile, unhealthy Air Quality Index days measured in the Antelope Valley between 2000 and 2012 decreased from 8 to 2, respectively. AQI levels are considered unhealthy when levels on the color-coded reporting scale fall between 151 and 200 and everyone - especially children, the elderly, and individuals with heart and lung disease - is advised to limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

"Clean air continues to provide a primary incentive for residents and businesses to call the Antelope Valley home," said AVAQMD Governing Board Chair Marvin Crist, adding, "Continued air quality improvements means Antelope Valley residents are breathing easier with each passing year."

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California and its individual air districts have made remarkable progress in cleaning the air during the past three decades in spite of dramatic increases in population and driving. From 1980 to 2010, the state's population increased by 65 percent and daily miles driven by all vehicles increased by 137 percent. But thanks to a comprehensive air pollution control strategy, smog-forming pollutants were cut by 55 percent during the same period. California's largest industrial plants also cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent between 2008 and 2011.

These improvements have occurred in spite of the fact that neither the state nor local air districts have the authority to regulate federally controlled sources of air pollution including ships, locomotives and aircraft.

For a copy of *California's Progress Toward Clean Air*, visit www.avaqmd.ca.gov